Rural Nursing Education Program RNEP

Washington Health Workforce Council Meeting
Nov. 20, 2025

RNEP-Revolutionizing Rural Nursing Education in Washington State

Rural Nursing Education (RNEP)

Mission

- To grow a strong and diverse rural nursing workforce by providing access to remote rural nursing education and training.

Rural Nursing Education (RNEP)-

Vision

- Establish an innovative and sustainable “grow your own” remote nursing program using transformative clinical models that fosters community-based collaborations.

Rural Nursing Education (RNEP)

- **Goals**
  - Educate students to be registered nurses who want to live, work, and learn in rural communities across Washington State.
  - Partner with healthcare facilities, community organizations, and educational institutions to educate nursing students.

RNEP: Background

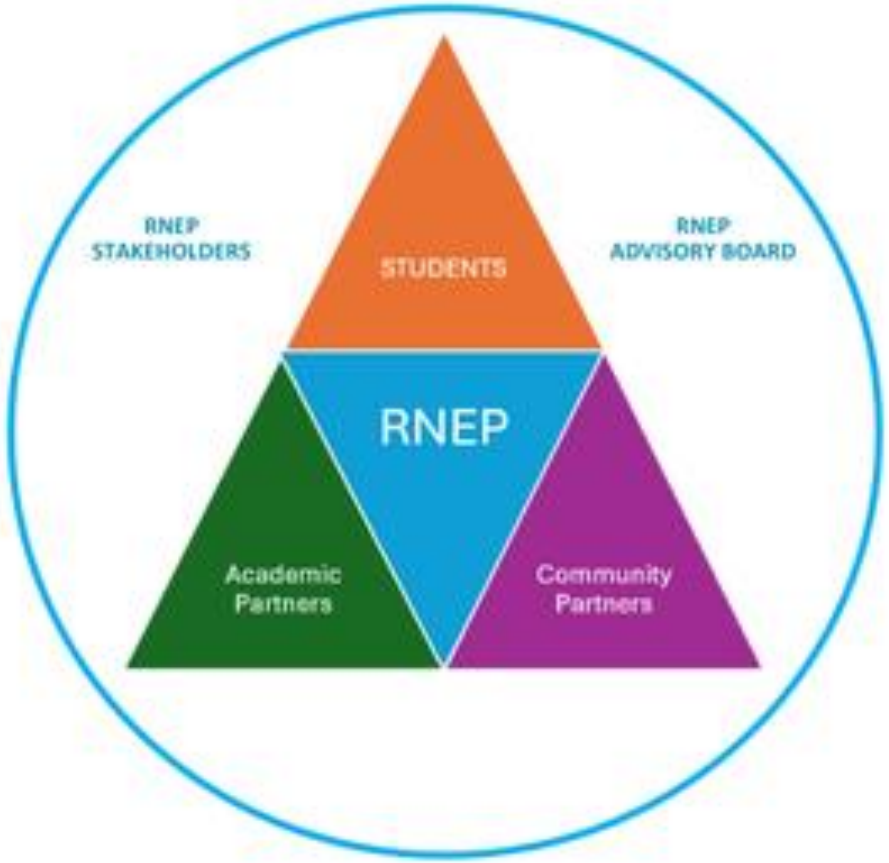
- Washington Center for Nursing Education (WCN)
- Rural Gaps Workgroup

- Legislative proviso
- 2023- $350,000
- 2024- $42,000
- 2025- $42,000

- HRSA Grant
- 2025-2029 Nurse Education, Practice, quality and Retention (NEQPR) Workforce Expansion Program (WEP)
- $3.7 Million

RNEP: Framework

- **Students**
- **Academic Partners**
- **Rural Community Partners**



Big Bend
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Academic Partner

- Coursework is remote - 100% online
- Rural Cohort of 10 students
- Remote access to clinical faculty
- Preceptor-based training
- Rural clinical learning environment
- Dedicated Education Unit (DEU) or preceptor clinical model
- Robot/Virtual simulation technology

Introducing: Katherine Christian MSN-Ed, RN, CNE

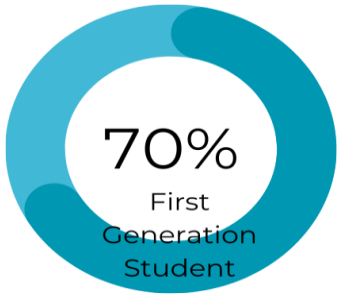
Director, Allied Health Programs
Big Bend Community College
509.793.2130 zoom https://bigbend.zoom.us/j/83947744611

Snapshot RNEP Students

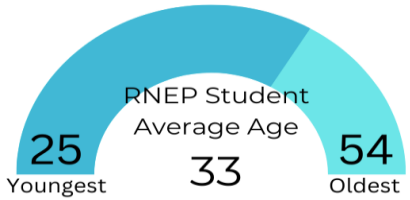
Rural Nursing Education Program (RNEP)

Revolutionizing Rural Nursing Education in Washington State

Snapshot of RNEP Students



90 % Female, 10% Male

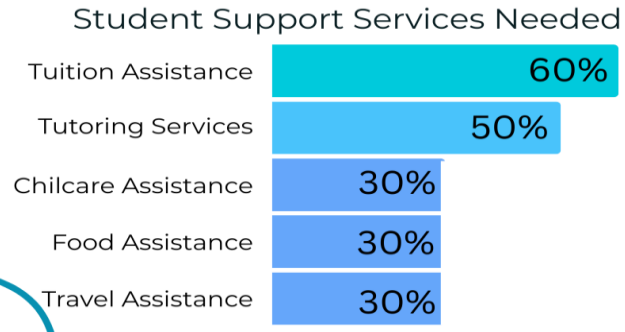


30% Non-Caucasian

40% Multilingual

50% Have lived in their community for 10+ Years

60% Live 50 Miles+ from a Nursing School



"Having the opportunity to attend school online is the only way I'm going to be able to financially take care of my family while working towards my career goals. The RNEP Program has saved me and finally given me the chance I need to become a nurse."
2024-25 RNEP Student

40% of RNEP Students have a total household income of $50,000 or less per year.

For more information contact:
Kelly Shaw, MPH-Department of Health, RNEP Director, kelly.shaw@doh.wa.gov

RNEP Students

Student Selection

- Live and learn locally
- Work in a critical access hospital
- Commitment to rural nursing practice after graduation
- Success in community college coursework
- Acceptance into community college

RNEP Support

- Access to online coursework
- Locating pre-requisite courses
- Access to local clinical practicums
- Access to local clinical preceptors
- Support services:
  - Academic planning, study skills tutoring referrals life balance strategies
- Tuition/books reimbursement
- Food security
- Travel
- Childcare

Introducing: Jenny Kugler

- Worked 6 years at Ferry County Hospital
- Nursing Assistant Certified
- Unit Coordinator for ED
- Mobile Integrate Health Department as Lead MIH Tech
- Emergency Medical Technician

RNEP Community Partners

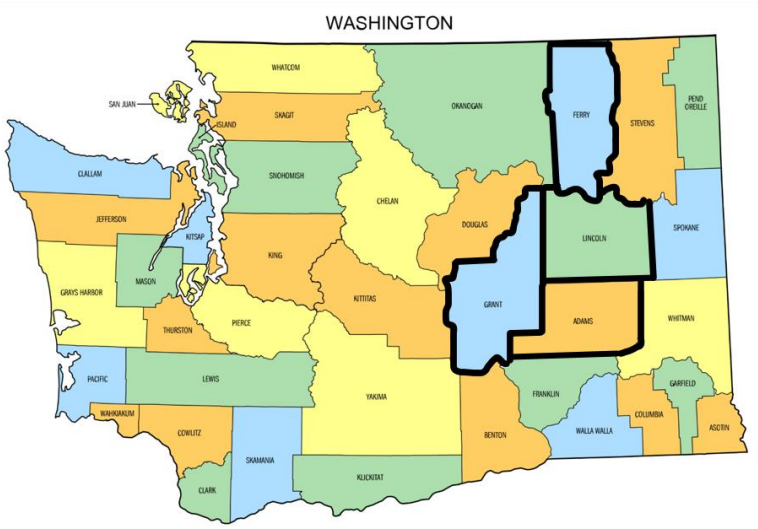
Coulee Medical Center
Grand Coulee, WA

Ferry County Health
Republic, WA

Lincoln Hospital & Clinics
Davenport, WA

Othello Community Hospital
Othello, WA

RNEP Community Partners



- Strong Organizational support
- Variety of services
- Need for workforce expansion
- Interest in partnership
- Space for simulation training
- Have employees interested in being RN's
- Support students with flexible time for studies
- Have nurses who want to be preceptors and will go through training
- Open to preceptor or DEU clinical training models
- Consider hiring students as RN technician during training and RNs after graduation
- Participate in RNEP meetings, advocacy and evaluations.

Introducing: Wendy Johnson MSN, BSN, RN

- Director of Ferry County Health NAC Program and Endoscopy.
- Lives in Republic, Washington
- Ferry County Health (FCH) 4 1/2 years
- Participated in DOH Pilot for NAC and State testing
- Takes great pride in “grow your own” programs

RNEP- Timeline

2024

- Identified academic partner (BBCC)
- Identified 5 community Partners (n=4)
- Selected 10 students (n=7)
- Secured additional funding
- Made site visits
- Purchased Robots and student sim supplies
- Created student progression plans

RNEP- Timeline

2025

- Legislative funding
  - (2-year proviso)
- HRSA Grant (4-years) administered by DOH
- Hiring RNEP personnel
  - FT Program Manager
  - FT Administration Assistant
  - FT Student Support Specialist
  - PT Program Evaluator
- Students taking prerequisite courses
- Cohort 1: Students taking TEAS test
- Facilities identifying preceptors
- Start RNEP preceptor training program
- Apply for Washington State Health Care Authority: Rural Health Transformational Program funding

RNEP- Timeline

2026

- Cohort 1 students start nursing classes
- Start Cohort 2:
  - Identify 5 community partners
  - Start 10 new students in pre-requisites
- Create summer Long-Term Care Immersion
- Ongoing student and facility support
- Develop preceptor training program

Next Steps:

SECURE LONG -TERM FUNDING

ASSIST STUDENT ENTERING NURSING PROGRAM

FORM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

EVALUATE PROGRAM

EXPAND PROGRAM

ADD STUDENT COHORTS, ACADEMIC PARTNERS AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS

RNEP Development Team

Kelly Shaw, MPH
Department of Health
RNEP Director and Co-founder
kelly.shaw@doh.wa.gov

Brenda Senger, PhD, RN
RNEP Co-founder and Nurse Consultant
sengerb@gonzaga.edu

Kristen Kienzle
RNEP Administrative Assistant
kristen.kienzle@doh.wa.gov

Theresa Bowden DNP, MSN-Ed, RN
RNEP Student Support
Theresa.Bowden@wsu.edu